

NHs in North East

*227. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the roads proposed by different States of the North-Eastern Region for inclusion as National Highways;

(b) the names of the roads accepted by the DONER, those rejected and those kept under consideration; and

(c) the reasons where the proposals have been rejected?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The names of the roads proposed by different State Governments of the North-Eastern Region for declaration as National Highways are given below:—

Assam i. Dhodar Ali

Meghalaya i. Nongstoin-Tura Road

ii. Agia-Medhipara-Phulwabri-Barengapara Road

Nagaland i. Bokajan in Assam Rengmapani-Kiphire in Nagaland.

ii. Halflong-Mahur-Laike-Kohima in Nagaland.

iii. Tuensang in Nagaland-Naginimora-Sibsagar in Assam.

Tripura i. Kukital to Sabroom via Dharamnagar-Amarpur, Rupaichari

Sikkim i. Alternate National Highway from Nathula to Siliguri

(b) and (c) Declaration of National Highways is a subject allotted to this Ministry. At present, emphasis is given for development of the existing National Highways instead of declaring more National Highways.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, the hon. Minister of his reply has stated that he is inclined to declare more roads as National Highways. It is also good that he is inclined to improve the existing National Highways. But

the fact is, the North-Eastern Region is lagging far behind in infrastructure development. Lack of communication and transport facilities are the main hurdles in this region. So, the creation of new National Highways in the North-Eastern Region cannot be kept in abeyance any more. The reason is that this region is far backward when compared with other regions of the country. So, keeping this in view, whether the hon. Minister will revise his decision and accord sanction to declare the new roads proposed by different States of North-Eastern Region as the National Highways as early as possible.

SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA: Sir, in the North-Eastern Region, there is already 6,880 kms. of National Highways. We have to improve this. Until and unless we complete the improvement of these National Highways, it is difficult to take up new roads. But, at the same time, the hon. Prime Minister is keen to develop the North-Eastern Region. For this purpose, the UPA Government has taken a model programme for the development of the North-Eastern States by constructing 7,616 kms. under the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme. We are going to construct roads under this. In the first phase, we are going to construct 1,310 kms. by 2009. We are committed for the development of the North-Eastern Region and bring it to the mainstream.

SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Sir, the State Government of Tripura has proposed a road from Kukital of Assam to Sabroom in Tripura via Dharamnagar, Kailasahar, Komalpur, Khowai and Amarapur for inclusion in the National Highways. This has also been mentioned in the reply. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister by when these sub-divisions, blocks and district headquarters, which are not covered by the existing National Highways, would be covered under the National Highways as proposed. And, by when the hon. Minister will declare the roads, which have been proposed in the reply, as the National Highways, to cover mainly the tribal areas of the State?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the question is whether to declare the proposed roads as the National Highways, which is a cumbersome and time-consuming process, or, to strengthen or upgrade the existing ones to the standard of National Highways. The second option was advised by the hon. Prime Minister. In his wisdom, he has advised us to take up 4,388 kms. of State Highways and upgrade and strengthen them to the level of the National Highways. This is going to happen before 2012. For this, the

hon. Prime Minister has inaugurated the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for the North-Eastern Region alone. This special dispensation has been extended by the hon. Prime Minister to the North-Eastern Region. This also includes the roads in Tripura. We have received eight proposals, extended to 1,727 kms. of North-East. But the question is whether we should have 1,727 kms of 4,388 kms. That's the question. I think, the second option is definitely appreciable.

श्री ओम्प्री लेपचा: सभापति महोदय, सिक्किम एक लैंड-लॉक्ड स्टेट है। सिर्फ National Highway 31 ही इसका एक मात्र लाइफ लाईन है। सिलिगुड़ी से लेकर गंगटोक तक के लिए जो कार्पेटिंग वर्क स्टार्ट हुआ, उसके तीन साल हो गए लेकिन यह आज तक क्यों नहीं कम्प्लीट हुआ है? इस National Highway 31 के अलावा सिक्किम जाने के लिए दूसरा कोई एयर-लिंक अथवा रेल-लिंक नहीं है। उसके लिए सिर्फ एक ही National Highway 31 ही है। केन्द्र सरकार के पास राज्य सरकार की ओर से अल्टरनेटिव National Highway के लिए कुछ मांगे आई हैं, तो केन्द्र सरकार इसके बारे में क्या सोच रही है, यह सैक्शन होगा या नहीं, कृपया इसके बारे में सदन को बताएं?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, the State Government of Sikkim has sent one proposal, that is, to declare an alternate national highway from Nathu La to Silliguri as a national highway. This particular road has not yet been taken to declare it as a national highway. Anyway, we will discuss the matter with the hon. Chief Minister of the State. We will discuss the matter with other officials also. If there is any urgent necessity, we will definitely take it up.

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, the road communication in the North-Eastern Region is not at all good, as on today. We are happy that our Prime Minister has taken a lot of initiatives for development of road communication in Assam and the North-Eastern Region. I would like to know from the hon. Minister why the work of the East-West Corridor in Assam is progressing very slow. Secondly, there was a proposal for constructing a second bridge near Guwahati over the River Brahmaputra. The hon. Minister had last year assured me about this, but nothing has been started till now. May I know from the hon. Minister what action has been taken with respect to constructing the second bridge over the River Brahmaputra; and, what steps are being taken to speed up the work of East-West Corridor in Assam and the North-Eastern Region.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, in Assam 858 kms. are single-lane roads, 1960 kms. form part of two-lane roads, 18 kms. form part of four-lane roads. That's why during my visit to the State of Assam, I had lengthy discussions

with the hon. Chief Minister, other Ministers of the State, and other senior officers of the State. We have identified certain stretches to upgrade and strengthen the standard of four-lane roads, which is taking a lot of attention. The DPR is ready. We will be taking up the project very shortly.

Sir, as far as the second bridge over the River Brahmaputra is concerned, we are going to consider the project as quickly as possible.

Potential of Orissa Coast

*228. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government are aware that Orissa coast has good potential in the port sector, yet it remains to be tapped; and

(b) if so, the action plan of Government to help the state to exploit this potential to improve the economy of this backward State?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Central Government is fully conscious of the potential for development of ports in the State of Orissa. Under the National Maritime Development Programme (NMDP), a total of 28 projects involving an investment of Rs. 2403 crores have been identified to be taken up for implementation by the Paradip Port Trust, which is the only major port in Orissa, over the period up to 2011-12. Non-major ports are under the overall jurisdiction of the respective State Governments in whom the responsibility for their development vests. Accordingly, the responsibility for development of the non-major ports along the coastline in Orissa vests in the Government of Orissa. However, one non-major port in the State of Orissa, namely Gopalpur port has been identified for development under the NMDP as a part of the plan to develop coastal shipping.

MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government of India intend to allocate any fund for the Gopalpur Port, and what other assistance they want to give.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, we have got twelve major ports and 187 minor ports. The Gopalpur Port is one of the minor ports in Orissa. At the same time, we have identified the Gopalpur Port as one of the projects under the National Maritime Development Projects. We have already asked the